

Lesson 15

Recruiting, Training and Recognizing Volunteers

Materials:

- ☐ Overhead or PowerPoint slides
 - Reasons People Volunteer
 - Club Leader Role
 - Project Leader Role
 - Training Prepares Leaders to
- ☐ Flip Chart Pages prepared with the following headings.
 - What could volunteers be asked to do?
 - Where could you look for volunteers?
 - What does a potential volunteer need to know?
 - What are some good experiences you have had as a volunteer?
 - What are some bad experiences you have had as a volunteer?
- ☐ Markers

Objectives:

1. To highlight the importance of volunteers to 4-H youth development delivery.
2. To provide information needed to recruit volunteers.
3. To provide information needed to start the process of training volunteers.
4. To provide information needed for ongoing support and recognizing volunteers.

What to do -

Introduce the importance of volunteers to the delivery of 4-H youth development opportunities.

What to Say -

All 4-H clubs must have an adult leader. Historically, 4-H has relied upon volunteers to fill this role. 4-H defines a volunteer as anyone who is not paid through the Cooperative Extension System. 4-H volunteers are adults and older youth who serve as club leaders, project leaders, camp counselors etc.

What to do–

What to Say–

Some volunteer leaders work directly with youth and some with other volunteers as trainers and mentors. Volunteer leaders have been an integral part of the success of 4-H Youth Development Programs since the 1920's. They are essential to effective 4-H delivery.

If you are a youth development professional from a partnering organization, you may not have relied as heavily as 4-H has upon volunteers to deliver your program. However, it is important to recognize the potential to expand program opportunities that skilled volunteers offer.

If you are a 4-H Youth Development professional you are probably working with communities that have a cadre of volunteers serving in these various roles. However, if you are expanding your 4-H program by starting new 4-H clubs or groups, you will need to find new volunteers to provide adult leadership. It is unrealistic to expect volunteers who are currently involved in your program to take on additional responsibilities to expand your program.

We are going to spend some time addressing ways to recruit and support these volunteers.

Give each table of participants one of the prepared flip chart pages and a magic marker. Each table should have a different colored marker. (If you have a large group, you will need to divide the room into sections of five tables each and give the table groups in these sections one of each of the five questions).

Instruct the group to record their responses to the question on the page they have been given.

Questions are:

- What could volunteers be asked to do?



What to do–

What to Say–

- Where could you look for volunteers?
- What does a potential volunteer need to know?
- What are some good experiences you have had as a volunteer?
- What are some bad experiences you have had as a volunteer?

Call time after three minutes and instruct the group to exchange pages with the table nearest them and to answer the question on their new page.

Call time after three minutes and instruct the groups to pass their paper to same table that received their last page.

Continue this process until all five tables have had a chance to answer all five questions. Facilitate a discussion of the responses.

Each table group has been given a question related to recruiting volunteers. I want your group to work together to record as many responses as you can to the question you have been given. Write your answers below the question on the page. I am going to give you three minutes to do this.

Time is up. Please pass your page to the table nearest you. When your group has received a new page, record your responses to the new question below those responses made by the first group. You will have three minutes to record your responses. (If you are working with groupings of tables, be sure that the exchange of pages stays within each section of tables.)

Time is up. Please pass your page to the table you passed to last. When your group has received the next page, record your responses to the new question below those responses made by the group before you. You will again have three minutes to record your responses.



What to do–

What to Say–

Let's see what we have discovered from this group brainstorming effort. Will the table(s) holding the question, "what could volunteers be asked to do?" hold up your page and read it to us? Are there any questions about this list? (If using several tables for each question, review all pages of each question before moving to the next question.)

Emphasize the many levels of involvement—from addressing envelopes to managing an event to assuming leadership for the entire club. Note that all parents or caregivers should be given the opportunities to assist the club in ways that their economic and work situations allow. Ask for a report on the second question.

Will the table(s) holding the question, "where could you look for volunteers?" read the responses on your page? Are there any questions about these responses?

Some responses might include: local elementary and high school personnel: teachers, paraprofessionals, office staff, social workers etc.; community colleges; civic organizations like Lions, Kiwanis, Optimists etc.; interested parents; retired community members; local 4-H alumni; 4-H teen leaders.

Ask for a report on the third question.

Will the table(s) holding the question, "what do potential volunteers need to know?" read the responses on your page? Are there any questions about these responses?

Emphasize the importance of identifying the responsibilities and preparing a job description before recruiting leaders. People want to know what they are



What to do–

What to Say–

agreeing to do before they volunteer. They also need to see the benefits they will receive from the volunteer role they are thinking of assuming.

Ask for a report on the fourth question.

Emphasize that remembering individual experiences as a volunteer can help us understand what interests potential volunteers and what is perceived as supportive.

Continue this process with the last questions.

Remind the group that this list of negative experiences provides a checklist of actions to avoid with volunteers.

Note, participants may request that the information that was generated through this brainstorming activity be recorded and distributed to the group.

Discuss reasons why people volunteer using slide 1.

Will the table(s) holding the question, “what are some good experiences you have had as a volunteer”, please read the responses on your page? Are there any questions about these responses?

Will the table holding the last question, “what are some bad experiences you have had as a volunteer?” read their list of responses now?

Research tells us that volunteers want to feel that their service is helping the community. Different people may be motivated by different conditions. Most volunteers become involved because they want

An opportunity to help their families.

An opportunity to work with youth.

An opportunity to learn new skills.

An opportunity to help the community.

An opportunity to meet and get to know



What to do–

What to Say–

Point out the connection between efforts to recruit volunteers and understanding why people volunteer.

Discuss the importance of having job descriptions available for the volunteer roles you are trying to fill.

Use slide 2 to present the role of the Club Leader.

people in the community.
An opportunity to develop leadership skills.
An opportunity for community recognition.
An opportunity to use personal skills and knowledge.
An opportunity to learn more about community efforts and activities.

Recruiting efforts will be enhanced if you can highlight the way participation as a volunteer meets some of these needs. When you have identified potential volunteers, you will want to plan the way you will approach them about serving as 4-H leaders. This list of common reasons to volunteer should help you provide potential volunteers with the benefits they will receive from this volunteer role.

Recruitment will be much easier if you have identified the responsibilities associated with the leadership roles you are seeking to fill. These job descriptions will also make it easier for you to support volunteers once they have been recruited. For the purposes of this training, we will discuss sample job descriptions of two primary volunteer roles, the Club Leader and the Project Leader.

The job description of the club leader has become fairly standard across states. The club leader is the organizational leader of the group and works with members and their parents to provide experiences that will support youth in their positive growth and development. The club leader is responsible for three major functions:

- 1.) Supporting youth. This includes providing encouragement, ideas and learning opportunities to individual 4-H members



What to do–

What to Say–

Use slide 3 to discuss the role of the Project Leader

- and the group.
- 2.) Recruiting other volunteers to assist with project and club activities as needed.
 - 3.) Linking the club to the county 4-H office and program. Every local 4-H club is a part of a system defined by Cooperative Extension. The club leader maintains contact and keeps communication open between the club and the local 4-H office through the 4-H Agent.
 - 4.) Bridging the club with the community. Club leaders assure that the 4-H club contributes to and also makes use of community resources. They keep the community informed about the youth development opportunities in which club members are involved. Communities are proud to support 4-H when the activities and goals of the program contribute to the positive growth of their youth and support community goals.

The club leader is usually the first leader recruited when the group is being formed. You may want to identify someone to fill this role before holding your first organizational meeting, although this is not essential.

Project leaders take on the role of teacher. They focus their efforts on teaching life skills through the content of selected topics. Life skills addressed include concern for others, effective communication, positive self-esteem, responsibility and cooperation. The project leader is responsible for four major functions.

- 1.) Creating a positive learning environments to assure that the needs of all youth involved in the project are met and developing caring relationships with youth.



What to do–

What to Say–

Discuss other possible volunteer roles in a 4-H club.

Provide information related to screening of volunteers

- 2.) Providing experiences that teach the project subject matter using experiential learning methods.
- 3.) Providing opportunities and processing those experiences to support the development of life skills.
- 4.) Helping youth set realistic goals for themselves within their project and support them in reaching those goals.

In addition to these leader roles, clubs often have an events coordinator, teacher/mentors for club officers and recognition coordinators. Be prepared to explain all of these roles at the organizational meeting held with your new club. At that time the group can determine the leadership roles that they believe they will need. It will also be important to survey the interests, talents and skills of parents and other potential volunteers. Use this information to match people to volunteer positions. Reduce barriers of participation by being flexible in providing opportunities to assist the club.

If you are a 4-H youth development professional, your most direct contact with youth is often through the volunteers who work with 4-H youth. Therefore, it is imperative that you know the policies in your state regarding screening, registration and training requirements for volunteers. Each state has requirements specific to that state. You will need to know and share this information with staff from partnering organizations as well, and assist them in accessing volunteer training opportunities in your county, area/district and state. If you did not receive this training during your new agent orientation, you will need to contact your state 4-H office to seek out this information.

If you are a youth development profes-



What to do–

What to Say–

Briefly discuss training of volunteers.

sional in an organization other than 4-H, ask your 4-H agent what requirements must be met for your state's screening, training and appointment processes. Find out how to access volunteer training opportunities scheduled in the county, area/district, or state. Because you are not paid through Cooperative Extension, you are eligible to participate in this training and any of the volunteers you choose to involve in your program are eligible as well.

When using paid staffing in lieu of volunteers, a partnering organization may share the responsibility with 4-H to meet the state's policies and procedures for volunteer leadership roles. Often times the partnering organization assumes the liability for their staff in the role as "volunteer leader" for the 4-H club unit.

A 4-H Club will not be successful if adult leaders do not feel confident and excited about their roles. As soon as volunteers have been secured, training must be offered to prepare them for the roles they will be expected to fill. It is not fair to ask someone to assume a responsibility without adequate preparation for the task. Leaders of new clubs cannot be expected to get their clubs running smoothly without training and support.

Your job as a youth development professional is to assure that youth and volunteers find their experiences in your organization to be fulfilling and growth producing. Certainly, a 4-H Club will not be successful if the adult leaders do not feel confident about their ability to carry out their functions and assured that they are contributing to the program. Volunteers should be required to participate in training for the leadership role they have accepted with the 4-H program.



What to do–

What to Say–

Introduce the skills of leadership that need to be conveyed through volunteer training using slide 4.

Because 4-H relies heavily on volunteers, a wealth of material has been developed over the years to assist agents in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. Training opportunities for volunteers will focus on the skills and attitudes that have been shown to characterize effective leaders as well as on the delivery of opportunities to develop life skills.

There are some general skills and attitudes that are common to all volunteer roles. These should be addressed early in the volunteer career. This slide lists the skills and attitudes that characterize effective volunteer leaders. They

- Have an understanding of youth development principles.
- Take responsibility as a leader – work with youth to set limits and provide guidance.
- Share certain responsibilities with youth as age appropriate.
- Have high expectations and hold youth accountable.
- Are sincerely interested in what youth think and want.
- Are always respectful of youth and their ideas, feelings, skills and fears.
- Recognize the accomplishments of young people.
- Encourage cooperation and do not compare youth.
- Are fair and objective. Do not show favoritism.
- Maintain professionalism – do not try to be like one of the kids.
- Are honest and sincere.
- Have the ability to facilitate teamwork and leadership of youth.

Briefly discuss life skill development training.

Training addressing life skill development often occurs as training for specific



What to do–

What to Say–

Use slide 5 to discuss the importance of ongoing support and recognition of volunteers.

project delivery. The 4-H project materials produced through the Cooperative Curriculum System include leader guides that review the use of hands-on teaching experiences for youth in specific subject matter and include directions for facilitating and processing those experiences to foster the growth of personal life skills. It will be important to provide a hands-on training experience in the use of these materials to all project leaders. The involvement in a group training experience assures that leaders understand the content and the experiential learning method used to deliver that content. Providing adequate training also serves as a form of recognition.

On going support throughout the year is important to the successful performance of the volunteer. Support can be provided by:

Maintaining contact with volunteers through the year. People are motivated to achieve when they feel their efforts are respected and that help is available when needed.

Assuring that meetings involving volunteers are clearly focused and relevant to the needs of the volunteers.

Reflecting on your communication style (face-to-face, phone, email, etc.) and assessing its effectiveness in connecting you with others. Assure that your communication skills demonstrate that you value your volunteers.

Skillfully handling conflicts that arise. Disagreement within an organization is to be expected, because people bring differing ideas to a situation or task. Disagreement can lead to new ideas and creative ways to approach situations when dealt with openly and honestly. When ignored or handled poorly it can escalate to unnecessary levels of conflict. Youth development profession-



What to do–

Discuss the importance of planning to provide recognition of volunteer efforts and accomplishments.

Use slides 6,7,8,& 9 to highlight some methods of recognizing volunteers.

What to Say–

als must become skilled in helping volunteers work through differences and reduce the potential for conflict. They must also gain skills in moving people through the conflicts that arise.

Encouragement and recognition are essential for active involvement of youth and volunteers in 4-H. Everyone likes to be appreciated for doing a good job. The kinds of recognition that are meaningful vary from individual to individual. It will be important to find out what forms of recognition are rewarding to the volunteers in your program.

Recognition activities need not be formal or expensive. The following list of informal and inexpensive recognition ideas for 4-H volunteers provide some ideas to work from.¹ This list is just a start. As you learn to know the volunteers who work in your program you will be able to identify the kinds of recognition that are most meaningful to each individual.

- Find opportunities to publicly thank volunteers and acknowledge their contributions. For example, write a news article for the local newspaper or your newsletter highlighting a volunteer's contributions or impact.
- Involve volunteers in providing input into the programs, coordinating programs or events, presenting workshops, etc.
- Invite volunteers to participate in staff meetings and conferences.
- Know the special interests of volunteers and design volunteer opportunities to capitalize on those interests and talents.
- Ask a volunteer to speak on behalf of the program to an outside agency or to a



What to do–

What to Say–

Instruct the group in building a plan for volunteer recruitment and support.

Move about the room to monitor progress and call time if the group is ready before the 15 minutes have elapsed. Facilitate a discussion of their plans.

Continue to hear reports of work as time permits. Some groups will be satisfied with a few reports and some will want to hear from everyone.

donor.

- Promote a volunteer to expanded or higher-level responsibilities.
- Write a letter of reference.
- Nominate volunteers for community, state or national awards.
- Encourage youth to send thank-you notes to volunteers who have helped them.
- Feature volunteers in print or media promotional publications.
- Provide recognition tokens such as plaques, certificates, pins, etc.
- Offer perks such as free admission, parking, reserved seating, etc.
- Have a Volunteer of the Month Award.
- Host a banquet, luncheon, party or reception in the volunteers' honor.

1. Adapted from: Ohio 4-H Volunteer Fact Sheet #40

Given the brainstorming information the group has generated and the slide discussion we just completed, I would like your table groups to make up a potential volunteer, determining their interests and talents, and then design the kind of recruiting, training and recognition plan you would use with that person. We will take about 15 minutes to do this.

I would like to hear what some of you have planned. Would anyone like to report their group's efforts?

What to do-

What to Say-

Facilitate a discussion of the planning process.

What happened as you were working to develop your plan?

What kinds of things did you take into consideration in your plan?

What did you learn that will help you recruit volunteers for your youth development program?

Bring closure to the lesson

4-H looks at volunteer leadership as a continuous process which begins with identifying a need which a volunteer can fill and ending with a decision to either renew the volunteer commitment, transferring into another volunteer role or the discontinuation of volunteer service. The goal of the youth development professional is to both keep and further the growth of volunteers within the organization. This goal is accomplished by providing the training needed to be successful, offering ongoing support in the performance of the volunteer role, and providing recognition for the work.

This lesson has provided only a cursory look at volunteer recruitment and development. You will need to take every opportunity to increase your skills in supporting the volunteers in your youth development program.



Reasons People Volunteer

An opportunity

- **to help their families.**
- **to work with youth.**
- **to learn new skills.**
- **to help the community.**
- **to meet and get to know people in the community.**



Reasons People Volunteer

An opportunity

- **to develop leadership skills.**
- **for community recognition.**
- **to use personal skills and knowledge.**
- **to learn more about community efforts and activities.**



Role of Club Leader

- 1. Supporting youth.**
- 2. Recruiting other volunteers.**
- 3. Linking the club to the county 4-H office and program.**
- 4. Bridging the club with the community.**



Role of the Project Leader

- 1. Creating positive learning environments that meet the needs of youth.**
- 2. Providing experiential learning experiences that teach the project subject matter.**



Role of the Project Leader

- 3. Processing those experiences to support life skill development**
- 4. Helping youth set and accomplish realistic goals**



Skills & Attitudes of Volunteers

- **Understand youth development principles.**
- **Set limits and provide guidance.**
- **Share age appropriate responsibilities with youth.**
- **Have high expectations and hold youth accountable.**



Skills & Attitudes of Volunteers

- **Exhibit sincere interest in what youth think and want.**
- **Exhibit respect for all youth.**
- **Recognize the accomplishments of young people.**
- **Encourage cooperation and do not compare youth.**



Skills & Attitudes of Volunteers

- **Are fair and objective. Do not show favoritism.**
- **Maintain professionalism.**
- **Are honest and sincere.**
- **Have the ability to facilitate teamwork and leadership.**



Ongoing Support for Volunteers

Maintaining contact.

**Assuring that meetings are clearly
focused and relevant.**

**Assessing the effectiveness of
your communication style.**

(face-to- face, phone, email, etc.)

Skillfully handling conflicts.



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Publicly acknowledge their contributions.**
- **Involve volunteers in**
 - **providing input into the programs,**
 - **coordinating programs or events,**
 - **presenting workshops, etc.**



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Invite volunteers to participate in staff meetings and conferences.**
- **Design volunteer opportunities to capitalize on interests and talents.**
- **Ask a volunteer to represent program to an outside agency or donor.**



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Promote a volunteer to expanded or higher-level responsibilities.**
- **Write a letter of reference.**
- **Nominate volunteers for awards**
 - **community,**
 - **state,**
 - **national awards.**



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Encourage youth to send volunteers thank-you notes.**
- **Feature volunteers in promotional print or media publications.**
- **Provide recognition tokens such as**
 - **plaques**
 - **certificates,**
 - **pins, etc.**



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Offer perks such as**
 - free admission
 - parking
 - reserved seating, etc.
- **Have a Volunteer of the Month Award**



Recognition Ideas for Volunteers

- **Host an event in the volunteers honor**
 - **Banquet**
 - **Luncheon**
 - **Party**
 - **Reception, etc.**



